

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 9983

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SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS: HELLENIKON AND TELECOMM.

REF: A. ATHENS 9940, B. STATE 291576; C. ATHENS 9604; D. ATHENS 822

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1. IN COURSE OF MEETING DEC 16 (REF -) CALOGERAS
TOLD STEARNS THAT HE HAD ONCE AGAIN DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT
OF US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON WITH HIS SUPERIORS. HE
REMINDS STEARNS THAT HE HAD EARLIER PROMISED TO SEEK
ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN THE GREEK POSITION ON HELLENIKON
(REF D). HE HAD DONE SO, HE SAID, BUT HAD FOUND
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GREEK MINISTERS SKEPTICAL ABOUT AMERICAN SIDE'S

ASSERTION THAT WE COULD NOT REDUCE THE US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON BELOW 850 WITHOUT MAJOR RELOCATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE ATHENS AREA. FURTHERMORE, THE MINISTERS ARGUED THAT IN LIGHT OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AT END OF SECOND PLENARY ROUND THAT US BASE AT HELLENIKON WOULD CLOSE AND THAT ONLY CERTAIN AMERICAN ACTIVITIES WOULD CONTINUE ON ENLARGED GREEK BASE, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOG TO CONTEMPLATE MARGINAL REDUCTIONS OF THE KIND SUGGESTED BY THE AMERICAN SIDE. MINOR REDUCTIONS IN US PERSONNEL STRENGTH OR INSIGNIFICANT PHYSICAL RELOCATION OF FUNCTIONS WOULD LEAVE GOG OPEN TO THE CHARGE THAT QTE NOTHING HAD CHANGED UNQTE AND THAT BASE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES WERE A SHAM.

2. DESPITE THIS ATTITUDE OF SKEPTICISM ON PART OF GREEK MINISTERS, CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO GAIN SOME ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY. HE WAS AUTHORIZED TO INFORM STEARNS THAT GREEK GOVT WAS NOW RPT NOW PREPARED TO ACCEPT A CONTINUING US PRESENCE AT HELLENIKON WHICH WOULD BE HALF THE SIZE OF OUR PREVIOUS FORCE LEVEL THERE. IN SPECIFIC TERMS THIS MEANT GOG WOULD AGREE TO US PERSONNEL LEVEL NOT RPT NOT TO EXCEED 750 PERSONNEL. THIS, HE SAID, WAS QTE ABSOLUTELY UNQTE THE LAST CONCESSION THE GREEK GOVT WOULD MAKE ON HELLENIKON. FURTHERMORE THERE COULD BE NO RPT NO RELOCATION OF PERSONNEL OR FUNCTIONS TO OTHER PARTS OF ATHENS. WHAT THE GREEK GOVT HAD IN MIND WAS REDUCTION IN TOTAL STRENGTH OF FORCE CURRENTLY AT HELLENIKON FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF ROUGHLY 1,500 TO A NEW LEVEL OF 750. CALOGERAS REPEATED THAT GREEK MINISTERS HAD BEEN MOST RELUCTANT TO GO THIS FAR AND HOPED THAT THE AMERICAN SIDE WOULD SHOW QTE EQUIVALENT FLEXIBILITY. UNQTE.

3. STEARNS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THIS NEW FORMULATION. HE SAID THAT, AS HE HAD POINTED OUT MANY TIMES BEFORE, WE COULD NOT RPT NOT CONTINUE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AT HELLENIKON WITH FEWER THAN 850 PEOPLE. EVEN THIS NUMBER WOULD REQUIRE SOME RELOCATIONS IN THE ATHENS AREA. STEARNS DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD REDUCE TO 750 WITHOUT IMPAIRING OUR OPERATING EFFICIENCY TO AN UNACCEPTABLE EXTENT. THE EFFECTS OF SUCH A REDUCTION

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WOULD BE EVEN MORE DAMAGING IF WE WERE UNABLE TO RELOCATE SOME ACTIVITIES PRESENTLY PERFORMED AT HELLENIKON TO ADJACENT SITES IN THE ATHENS AREA. WHILE HE APPRECIATED CALOGERAS EFFORTS TO GAIN ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY, HE WAS NOT RPT NOT HOPEFUL THAT A 750 MAN FORCE LEVEL AT HELLENIKON, UNDER THE CONDITIONS OUTLINED BY CALOGERAS, WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO OUR NEEDS. HE TOLD CALOGERAS THAT HE WOULD HOWEVER REPORT THE NEW GREEK POSITION TO

WASHINGTON AND WOULD EXPLORE THE SUBJECT IN DETAIL JOINTLY WITH THE DEFENSE AND STATE DEPARTMENTS WHEN HE RETURNED TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATION IN JANUARY.

4. STEARNS SAID THAT PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE HE WOULD WISH TO REVIEW WITH CALOGERAS ONCE AGAIN ALL OF THE SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE THIRD PLENARY ROUND. HE NOTED THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAD REOPENED NEGOTIATIONS ON DCS USAGE AT THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUBGROUP LEVEL AND SAID HE WOULD WISH TO GAIN FROM CALOGERAS FURTHER INSIGHT INTO ULTIMATE GREEK OBJECTIVES IN THIS AREA. CALOGERAS OBSERVED THAT THE EXCHANGES IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUBGROUP HAD BEEN SATISFACTORY FROM THE GREEK STANDPOINT AND HE HOPED THAT GREEK INTEREST IN GAINING FURTHER QTE COMMON USE UNQTE OF DCS IN GREECE WOULD NOT RPT NOT POSE PROBLEMS FOR US. STEARNS SAID WE HAD REPORTED THE GREEK POSITION TO WASHINGTON BUT HAD AS YET RECEIVED NO REACTION. HE HAD HIMSELF BEEN SURPRISED AND CONCERNED TO SEE THE GREEKS REOPENING ASPECTS OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS DISCUSSIONS WHICH HE HAD ASSUMED HAD ALREADY BEEN SETTLED IN PRINCIPLE.

5. CALOGERAS REMINDED STEARNS THAT THE GREEK SIDE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD RESERVED THE RIGHT TO DISCUSS ANY SUBJECT RELATED TO US BASES IN GREECE AND TO RETURN TO SUBJECTS WHEN THEY DEEMED IT DESIRABLE. GENERALLY SPEAKING, PROGRESS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUBGROUP HAD BEEN SATISFACTORY AND THE US SIDE SHOULD NOT RPT NOT INTERPRET GREEK INTEREST IN DCS AS QTE RENEGOTIATION. UNQTE. GREEKS WERE SIMPLY INTERESTED IN SEEING IF THEY COULD OBTAIN GREATER DIRECT BENEFIT FROM DCS AND NEEDED MORE INFORMATION FROM US IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS DETERMINATION. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE TOLD CONFIDENTIAL

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STEARNS THAT THERE WAS STILL CONCERN ON THE PART OF GREEK MINISTERS ABOUT OUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT IRAKLION. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE CONTINUED TO HOPE THAT IN THE THIRD PLENARY ROUND THE GREEKS WOULD NOT RPT NOT FIND IT NECESSARY TO REOPEN THE ENTIRE SUBJECT OF IRAKLION BUT THIS WAS STILL POSSIBLE. GREEK MINISTERS REMAINED TO BE CONVINCED, HE CONTINUED, THAT OUR IRAKLION FACILITY CONTRIBUTED IN A DEMONSTRABLE WAY TO GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS. AT A MINIMUM, GOG WOULD NEED TO ADVANCE STRONG ARGUMENTATION TO DEMONSTRATE THAT OPERATIONS AT IRAKLION BENEFITTED IN TANGIBLE WAYS GREEK DEFENSE AND GREEK SECURITY.

6. STEARNS SAID THAT HE STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT THIS COULD BE DEMONSTRATED. HE AGAIN CAUTIONED CALOGERAS

AGAINST RAISING THE SUBJECT OF IRAKLION IN THE THIRD
PLENARY WITHOUT ADVISING US CAREFULLY IN ADVANCE EXACTLY
WHAT ASPECTS OF THE FACILITY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT
WISHED TO DISCUSS. CALOGERAS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS
POINT AND ADDED, SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUSLY, THAT HIS
EFFORTS TO AVOID DISCUSSION OF IRAKLION WOULD BE GREATLY
ASSISTED IF STEARNS COULD GAIN GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN
THE US POSITION ON HELLENIKON.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NOT RPT NOT YET BRIDGED
THE GAP BETWEEN GREEK AND US POSITIONS ON HELLENIKON,
IT IS ENCOURAGING TO SEE THERE IS STILL SOME MOVEMENT
IN THE GREEK POSITION. THEY HAVE, IN FACT, COME QUITE
A DISTANCE FROM THEIR POSITION IN THE FIRST AND SECOND
PLENARIES THAT ALL US PERSONNEL MUST DEPART FROM HELLEN-
IKON. ALTHOUGH CALOGERAS STATED THAT A US FORCE LEVEL
OF 750 WOULD INVOLVE NO RPT NO RELOCATIONS, WE THINK
THERE MAY BE SOME FURTHER GIVE ON THIS POINT. WHEN
STEARNS RETURNS TO WASHINGTON IN JANUARY, HE WILL
WANT IN PARTICULAR TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF
CREATING A SMALL QTE SATELLITE UNQTE SUPPORT BASE IN
THE GLYFADA AREA. SUCH A BASE, AS WE VISUALIZE IT,
MIGHT INCLUDE SCHOOL, PX, COMMISSARY AND SIMILAR
FACILITIES. SINCE SERVICES OF THIS KIND ARE THE MOST
CONSPICUOUS ASPECT OF OUR PRESENCE OAT HELLENIKON,
INVOLVING AS THEY DO MUCH TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE BASE
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BY DEPENDENTS, REMOVING THEM TO AN ADJACENT LOCATION
WOULD GREATLY REDUCE OUR SILHOUTTE WITHOUT MAKING
OUR ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS UNMANAGEABLE.

8. WE CANNOT YET JUDGE HOW SERIOUS THE GREEKS ARE ABOUT
OBTAINING GREATER JOINT USE OF DCS OR HOW SERIOUS
CALOGERAS IS WHEN HE REFERS TO IRAKLION. WE SUSPECT
THAT HIS REFERENCES TO IRAKLION ARE PRIMARILY A NEGOTIATING
PLOY DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE US TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING
ON HELLENIKON. AS FAR AS DCS IS CONCERNED, CALOGERAS
HAS NOT RPT NOT PUSHED HARD AND AT THIS STAGE, GREEK
SIDE SEEMS PRINCIPALLY INTERESTED IN GAINING MORE
INFORMATION.

9. WE BELIEVE IN ANY CASE THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO
NAIL DOWN -- OR AT LEAST PIN DOWN WITH THUMB TACKS --
RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS TO DATE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS
QUESTIONS. ACCORDINGLY, AND UNLESS DEPARTMENT HAS
OBJECTIONS, STEARNS PROPOSES TO PASS TO CALOGERAS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS TEXTS OF LETTERS TRANSMITTED IN REF A.
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